

# X-FACTOR

ISSUE 25



**RATED T+**



\$2.99 US \$3.05 CAN

## MESSIAH COMPLEX

chapter three

DAVID

**MARVEL**

EATON

# MESSIAH COMPLEX

CHAPTER THREE

# XFACTOR



**MARVEL**  
VARIANT  
EDITION  
25

DAVID  
EATON

**RATED T+**



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DIRECT EDITION

After M-Day, mutantkind neared extinction. Once hailed as humanity's replacement, it appeared mutants, now reduced to a few hundred, would fade into oblivion. But a new mutant baby has arrived, the first since M-Day, and with it, hope for mutantkind.

## Previously in MESSIAH COMPLEX...

The mutant baby has gone missing, and the X-Men suspect the Marauders, henchmen of their nemesis Mr. Sinister, of kidnapping the child. Cyclops dispatched a team of X-Men to subdue former allies of the Marauders and press them for information. The team uncovered a lead and now their hunt for the mutant baby draws one step closer to completion.

Meanwhile the mutant-hating Purifiers, an army of zealots who seek to kill the baby because they fear it is the Antichrist, are still reeling from their defeat at the hands of the Marauders. In their secret churches across the country, they continue to plot their next move.

## CHAPTER THREE:

*Peter David: Writer*

*Scot Eaton: Penciler*

*John Dell: Inker*

*Frank D'Armata: Colorist*

*Cory Petit: Letterer*

*Will Panzo: Assistant Editor*

*Nick Lowe: Editor*

*Axel Alonso: Executive Editor*

*Joe Quesada: Editor in Chief*

*Dan Buckley: Publisher*

*Cover A by: Finch, Miki, D'Armata*

*Cover B by: Campbell, Avalon Studios, Delgado*

**NEW YORK,  
KHELSEA**

ALASKA  
WAS ONLY THE  
FIRST STEP.

ACCORDING TO  
OUR LEADERS, THE  
MUTANT BABY IS STILL  
OUT THERE.

WORSE, THE  
X-MEN APPEAR TO  
HAVE LEARNED OF THE  
INFANT AND ARE  
DOUBTLESSLY ENGAGED  
IN THEIR OWN SEARCH  
OPERATIONS.

SO WHAT  
DOES THAT  
MEAN FOR US,  
TAYLOR?

IT MEANS THAT  
WE HAVE TO  
INCREASE OUR  
VIGILANCE.

WE CAN'T  
ALLOW THEM  
TO GET THE  
DROP ON US.

**GRRR...**

WHA--?

**GRRRRRRRR**











EEYARRRRHHH!!!

SPLASH

WOLFSBANE  
GET IN!

LINHH...

IT'S  
WOUNDED!  
FINISH IT  
OFF!



UNFFFF!



DON'T LET  
IT GET AWAY,  
BOYS.

IS THAT  
WHAT I THINK  
IT IS?



SURE WAS,  
MY FRIEND. 'A  
MILITANT.

FREAKIN'  
THINGS ARE RUINING  
THE CITY FOR THE REST  
OF US. YOU'RE ONE OF  
STYKER'S BUNCH, RIGHT?  
BEEN LOOKING FOR  
YOU FELLAS.



YEAH?  
WHAT'S YOUR  
NAME, PAL?

JOAQUIN.

JOAQUIN  
MURRIETA.

FRIENDS  
CALL ME  
JAKE.





**DALLAS, TEXAS  
FORGE'S AREA.**



AH, MAPROX.  
YOU'RE HERE.  
GOOD.

AND WHO IS  
THIS?



I'M LAYLA  
MILLER.

SHE  
KNOWS  
STUFF.



YOU NOTICE  
I HAVEN'T HAD TO  
SAY THAT IN A WHILE?  
EVERYBODY ELSE  
KEEPS SAYING IT FOR  
ME. ISN'T THAT  
FUNNY?

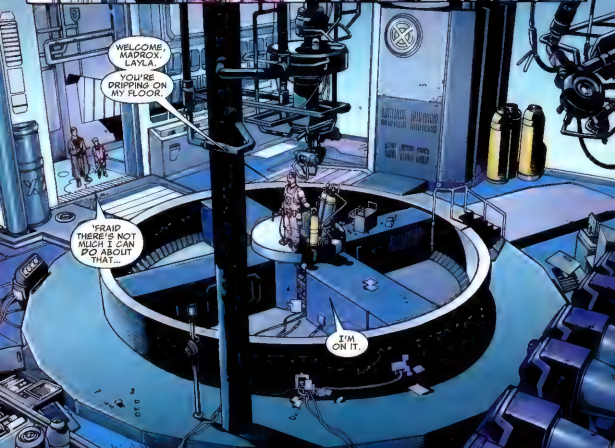
HILARIOUS.  
YOU WANT TO  
STEP ASIDE, FORGE?  
LET US IN OUT  
OF THE--



--RAIN?

IS THIS  
AMONG THE  
"STUFF" THAT  
SHE JUST  
KNOWS?

YOU HAD  
NO SHADOW. HALF  
THE STUFF I KNOW  
JUST COMES FROM  
PAYING ATTENTION.





NOT A TON, MOSTLY THAT YOU HAD A LITTLE GADGET DESIGNED FOR GATHERING INFORMATION.

THAT DAUNTING-LOOKING DEVICE IN THE CORNER IS A COFFEEMAKER. POUR YOURSELF SOME IF YOU'RE SO INCLINED.

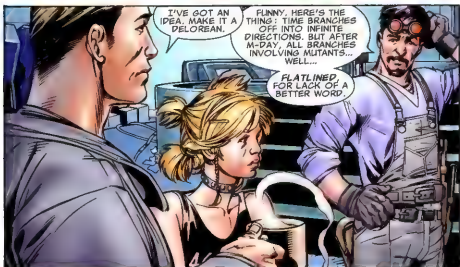
HOW MUCH DID SCOTT TELL YOU?

YES, WELL... THIS IS IT.

WHAT IS IT?

TIME MACHINE.

WELL, ACTUALLY, TO BE MORE ACCURATE, A SORT OF GPS FOR TIME AND SPACE. I CALL IT A CHRONAL TRACER. NEXT ONE'LL BE MORE COMPACT, BUT IT WORKS.



I'VE GOT AN IDEA. MAKE IT A DELOREAN.

FUNNY, HERE'S THE THING: TIME BRANCHES OFF INTO INFINITE DIRECTIONS. BUT AFTER M-DAY, ALL BRANCHES INVOLVING MUTANTS... WELL...

FLATLINED FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD.



I SEARCHED COUNTLESS FUTURES FOR SIGNS OF MUTANTS. CAME UP WITH SQUAT.



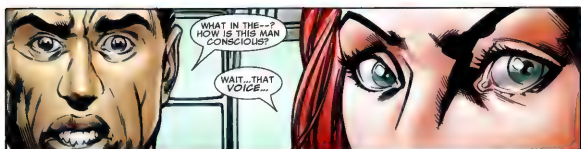
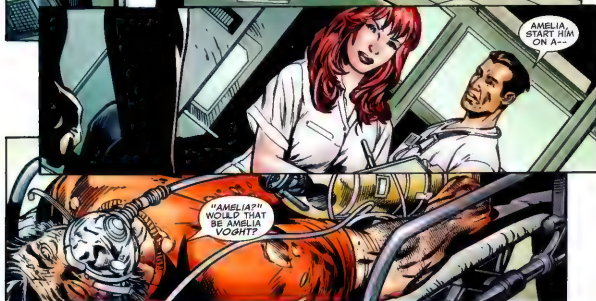
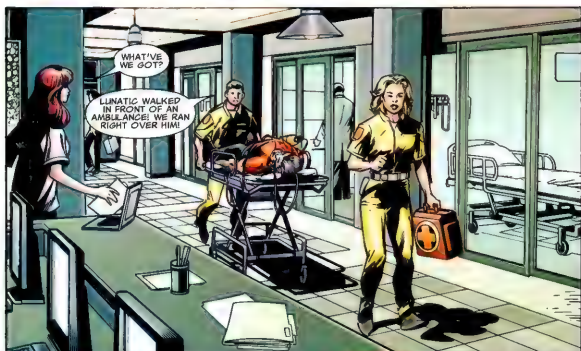
BUT SINCE THE BIRTH OF THE MISSING CHILD, TWO BRANCHES HAVE SPIKED.

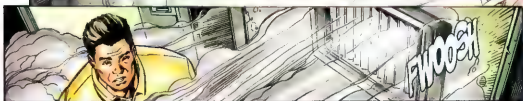
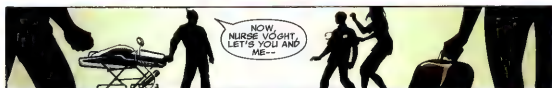
IT BEARS INVESTIGATION.

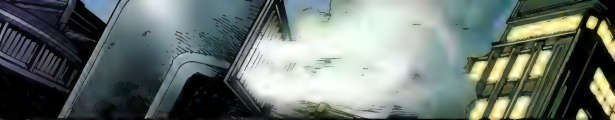


AND THAT'S WHERE I COME IN, WHAT WITH ME BEING AN INVESTIGATOR AND ALL.



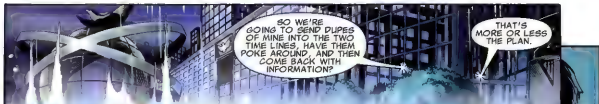






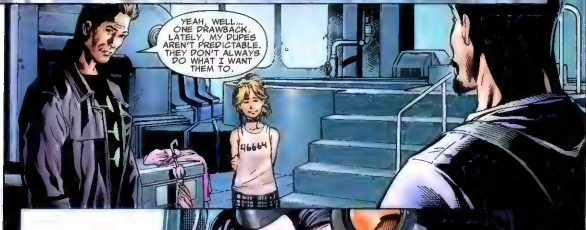
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD LET HER DOWN, STORM? I THINK SHE WILL BE GOING NOWHERE ANYTIME SOON.





SO WE'RE GOING TO SEND DUPES OF MINE INTO THE TWO TIME LINES, HAVE THEM POKE AROUND, AND THEN COME BACK WITH INFORMATION?

THAT'S MORE OR LESS THE PLAN.



YEAH, WELL... ONE DRAWBACK. LATELY, MY DUPES AREN'T PREDICTABLE. THEY DON'T ALWAYS DO WHAT I WANT THEM TO.



I'LL DO MY BEST.

WHUMP

WHUMP



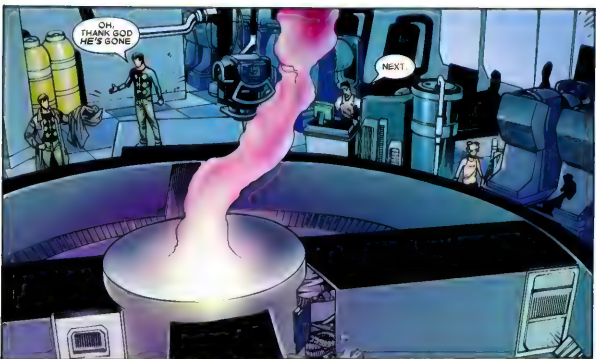
OKAY. WHAT'VE WE GOT, BOYS?

I DO WHAT MUST NEEDS BE DONE FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF MUTANTKIND.

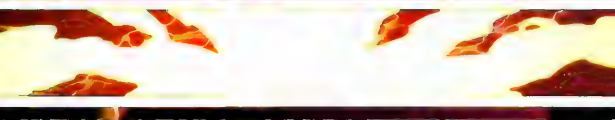
I'M JUST A GUY WITH A JOB TO DO. WE CAN STAND AROUND AND DISCUSS IT, OR WE CAN GET TO WORK.

I THINK WE'VE GOT OUR MEN.











LAYLA!!!

REVERSE IT!  
REVERSE IT  
RIGHT NOW!



I CAN'T!  
BOTH OF THEM  
ARE ONE-WAY  
TRIPS!



ONE WAY?!  
HOW THE HELL  
IS MY DUPE  
SUPPOSED TO  
GET BACK?

THEY'RE NOT.  
WHEN EACH OF THEM  
VANISHED, A MESSAGE  
WAS PSYCHICALLY  
TRANSFERRED INTO THEIR  
BRAIN CELLS. ONCE  
THEY ARRIVE, THEY'LL  
JUST KNOW...

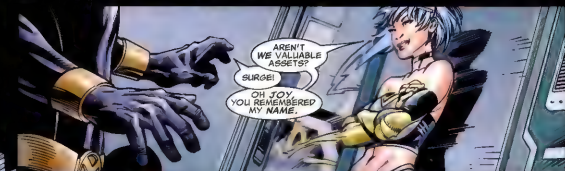
KNOW  
WHAT?!



THAT AS SOON  
AS THEY'VE GATHERED  
THE INTEL, THEY SHOULD  
KILL THEMSELVES. THEN  
THE KNOWLEDGE WILL BE  
TRANSFERRED DIRECTLY  
TO YOUR MIND, WITHIN  
SECONDS.







FWZAAAM

I AM TRYING TO  
OVERSEE A WAR  
THAT'S BEING FOUGHT  
ON HALF A DOZEN  
FRONTS.

IF YOU'RE  
FIGHTING A WAR,  
WE CAN HELP.

AND YOU  
WILL. BUT IT WILL  
BE WHERE I SAY  
SO, AND WHEN  
I SAY SO.

IF ANY OF  
YOU HAS A PROBLEM  
WITH THAT, YOU  
KNOW WHERE THE  
DOOR IS.

YOU'D  
DO THAT?

JUST  
LET US  
GO?

YES.

YES.

THEN I'D GO AFTER  
YOU. HALL YOU BACK  
HERE, AND CHEW YOU  
OUT FOR ABANDONING  
YOUR OWN SPECIES IN  
ITS TIME OF NEED...

THEY ALSO  
SERVE WHO STAND  
AND WAIT.

AND WHEN  
YOUR TIME  
COMES...

...YOU MAY  
WELL WISH IT  
HADN'T.



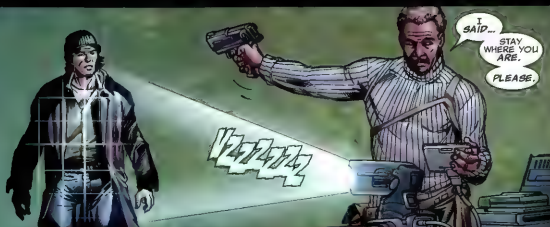
PLEASE  
EXCUSE OUR  
SECURITY MEASURES,  
JAKE, IF YOU  
WOULDN'T MIND  
LOOKING  
THIS WAY...



HEY!!! WHAT  
THE HELL IS  
THAT?!

PLEASE STAY  
WHERE YOU ARE,  
JAKE.

WHAT  
KIND OF  
STUPID--



EXCELLENT.

THE MUTANTS  
CAN BE INSIDIOUS,  
JAKE. MIGHT TRY TO  
GET ONE OF THEIR  
OWN IN HERE AS  
A SPY.

BUT THIS  
INDICATES THAT  
YOUR DNA IS HUMAN.  
YOU HAVE NO  
POWERS.



PRETTY HIGH  
TECH. YOU GUYS  
MAKE IT?

ACTUALLY  
WE DEVELOPED IT  
COURTESY OF AN  
"ACQUISITION." OUR  
RESOURCES ARE FAR  
MORE IMPRESSIVE  
THAN YOU CAN  
IMAGINE.

YEAH? WELL,  
I CAN IMAGINE  
QUITE A LOT...



WHAT TH--?  
IS THAT WALL  
MOVING?

YES, IT IS,  
JAKE. COME  
NOW...





YOU DIDN'T  
SERIOUSLY THINK  
THAT OUR ENTIRE  
NEW YORK OPERATION  
WAS LIMITED TO THIS  
ONE CHURCH,  
DID YOU?

AND  
HERE'S THE  
KICKER:



THIS IS  
ONE OF OUR  
SMALLER BASES.  
WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE  
WASHINGTON.

IT'LL  
BLOW YOU  
AWAY.

TO BE CONTINUED IN NEW X-MEN #44

# X-MEN: MESSIAH COMPLEX

## CHAPTER 4



### NEXT WEEK

Predator X makes its first kill.  
The X-MEN face the Marauders. And the  
NEW X-MEN suffer a casualty.



VARIANT COVER

AND A SNEAK PEAK AT THINGS TO COME...

# MESSIAH COMPLEX

## CHAPTER 5 - X-MEN #205



**The Sequel You've Been Waiting For**



# ULTIMATE IRON MAN II

**A 4-part limited series continuing  
the untold origin of Iron Man!**

**Orson Scott Card • Pasqual Ferry  
Variant Cover by Gabriele Dell'otio**

**December 2007**

**MARVEL**  
YOUR UNIVERSE

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MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION  
(REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)**

1. Publication Title: Astonishing X-Men
2. Publication No.: 022-592
3. Filing Date: September 25, 2007
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly except semi-monthly in May, June and October
5. No. of issues published annually: 15
6. Annual subscription price: \$27.00/12 issues
7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Contact Person: Leigh Praggoff, (212) 576-4000 x8637.
8. Complete mailing address of headquarters of general business office of Publisher: Same.
9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: Dan Buckley, 417 5th Avenue, New York, N.Y. Editor: Nick Lowe, 417 5th Avenue, New York, N.Y. Managing Editor: Justin F. Gabriele, 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016.
10. Owner (If owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.) Hundred Percent (100%) Of the Common Stock of Marvel Enterprises, Inc. is owned by Marvel Enterprises, Inc. Complete Mailing Address: Marvel Enterprises, Inc 10 East 40th St, New York, N.Y. 10016.
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12. Tax Status For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. (Check one.) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes: ☐ Has not changed during preceding 12 months. ☐ Has changed during preceding 12 months. (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)
13. Publication Title: Astonishing X-Men
14. Issue date for circulation data below: JUNE 2007
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation
  - A. Total No. Copies Printed (net press run): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 157,612. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 151,256.
  - B. Paid and/or requested Circulation: (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales. Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 157,436. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 132,643. (2) Paid or requested mail subscriptions: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 5,369. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 5,440.
  - C. Total Paid and/or requested Circulation (sum of 15B(1) and 15B(2)): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 142,805. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 138,083.
  - D. Free Distribution by mail (samples, complimentary, and other free): (1) Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 0. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0.
  - E. Free Distribution outside the mail: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 647. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 669.
  - F. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15D(1) and 15D(2)): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 647. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 669.
  - G. Total Distribution (Sum of 15C, 15D, 15E): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 143,453. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 138,752.
  - H. Copies not distributed (1) Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 14,159. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 12,504.
  - I. Total (Sum of 15F, 15G): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 157,612. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 151,256.
  - J. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15C / 15F x 100): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 99.5%. Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 99.5%.
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership: ☐ Publication required. Will be printed in the January issue of this publication.
- ☐ Publication not required.

17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Leigh Praggoff, 9/25/07.  
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# FURY'S FILES

Discovered in a decommissioned S.H.I.E.L.D. safehouse, below is a list of little known facts about the X-Men that Nick Fury had personally collected to be used or leveraged when necessary.



After being shot by a mutant power neutralizing gun designed by Forge and therefore losing her powers, Storm was granted the power of Thor, given an Uru Hammer and new weather powers by Loki.

Wolverine's claws actually burst out right through his skin, not through any kind of permanent holes. His mutant healing factor heals the wounds instantly.

Psylocke is a natural blonde.

X-23 is named due to her being the 23rd attempt to clone Wolverine and the intact X chromosome that was duplicated to replace the damaged Y one, which resulted in her being female. She is the only successful cloning attempt of Wolverine.

The image inducer Nightcrawler uses to appear human was invented by Tony Stark.

Dazzler temporarily acted as a herald of Galactus, when the world-devourer granted her powers on a cosmic scale so that she could hunt down Terrax, a former herald who had abused his powers.

Scarlet Witch and Angel briefly dated.

In Weird Al's song "White & Nerdy" one of the lines is "I've been browsin' and inspectin', X-Men comics you know I collect 'em." In the music video Al is holding up four X-Men comics: Uncanny X-Men #201, 210, 221 & 268.

Storm's real name, Ororo, means "Beauty."

Over the years, the minds of three different X-Men found themselves trapped in the body of the White Queen -- Jean Grey, Storm and Iceman.

Xavier once had a shapeshifter named Changeling assume his identity while he secretly prepared for an alien invasion. When the Changeling died in battle, the X-Men held a funeral for their mentor having no idea that he was actually alive.

Jubilee suffers from dyscalculia; an inability to complete mathematical problems.

Beast and Nightcrawler don't have blue skin, only a fine coat of blue fur.

Deadpool was once a bodyguard for Dazzler.

While working as an agent for the C.I.A., Wolverine once saved Spider-Man's parents from Hydra.

Professor X has been crippled (and healed) 4 times:

- 1<sup>st</sup> - In a fight with Lucifer
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> - Crushed in a fight with the Shadow King
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> - After he got the Techno-Organic Virus
  - 4<sup>th</sup> - Magneto stopped the nanites in his spine from working
- (After House of M, the Scarlet Witch had cured his spine, and he is now walking)

Storm was originally conceived by Dave Cockrum as "the Black Cat", a character who could transform into a feline creature or a house cat.



# LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

## WRITER MATT FRACTION



**MARVEL:** Reading *Immortal Iron Fist*, it's clear you and Ed Brubaker are having a blast. What makes this such a fun book for you as a creator?

**MATT FRACTION:** I think the character, honestly. I hope character is at the root of everything I do, and Danny's is remarkable to say the least. I always sort of felt our first arc was about Danny and the reader, discovering at the same time how exciting and thrilling the Iron Fist actually is—that our first storyline was a chance to celebrate everything that makes him great and hopefully convince other people to fall in love with him at the same time. So really, the answer is the character himself. It's all there, we're just polishing it up and showing it off.

The collaboration is great fun, too. Ed and I constantly trying to out-awesome one another makes it fun, too.

**M:** Iron Fist is one of those characters no one would've expected to be such a mainstream critical darling. Why do you think he's so irresistible to such a diverse group of people?

**MF:** Three words, baby: KUNG FU BILLIONAIRE. It shouldn't be rocket science, you know? Reduce Danny Rand down to his three most essential words and you find a great comic book waiting to happen.

**M:** We've recently learned that Danny Rand can do some pretty cool new things with his power. What's the oddest/funniest new thing Danny can do with the power of the Iron Fist?

**MF:** He can keep artist David Aja hypnotized into staying on *THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST* for a good long while, when surely he could be drawing almost any book on the market.

**M:** Why the aversion to shirts from Danny's opponents such as Davos? Do they just realize their costumes could never be as cool?

**MF:** Super-villains in Danny's world are sick and tired of your uptight nipple oppression, pal. Maybe if button-down squares like you weren't such shirt-fascists, these guys wouldn't have to BE evil? Why are you so afraid of male nipples, huh? You ever

bother to ask yourself that? **OUT OF THE SHIRTS, AND INTO THE STREETS! OUT OF THE SHIRTS, AND INTO THE STREETS! OUT OF THE SHIRTS, AND INTO THE STREETS!**

**M:** Over in *The Order* we've got quite a damaged group of heroes. This can't end well for all parties involved, can it? I foresee a lot of headaches for Stark...

**MF:** As time goes on, the grand secret of the Order will be revealed—it's a social experiment, first and foremost. Here's the thing: we're ALL damaged. All of us—real and fictional alike. Stark is just as damaged as Henry Hellrung or Dr. Doom or whomever.

So the question isn't how damaged are the people in the Order and what's gonna happen when they screw up, but rather, we're ALL human, we ALL screw up, and so, for these damaged people, what do they do when given the opportunity to heal themselves by helping others? When given the opportunity to rise, do they take it?

Also, how many billions of things can I get Barry Kitson to draw in a single panel?

**M:** One of the most fascinating aspects of this book is that our leads are clearly heroes while fighting evil...but outside of their super-heroic identities, there are certainly some concerns about their decisions. Just how far will some of these characters go to right what they perceive as wrongs?

**MF:** You know, I just wrote a scene between Kate (the PR person) and Pepper Potts, arguing over that same point. I think that's really the very definition of "hero"—when you're willing to walk alone and take grave risks to do the right thing. "Speak your mind, even if your voice trembles," right? In a nutshell, that's what the Order is all about. Rising up and doing right, in the face of near-insurmountable difficulty.

**M:** You've created most of these characters from scratch (though some like Pepper have been around awhile), meaning they're a blank canvas for you to paint. Is that freedom ever intimidating or just a writer's dream come true?

**MF:** Boy, a little bit of both, really. It's great to be given the chance to create a brand new super-hero team for the Marvel Universe, and the pride of creation I know Barry and I both feel is incredible beyond belief. To be allowed to sew our little square onto the, uh, Marvel quilt, is just incredible.

**M:** These guys can only be heroes for one year. What happens if someone doesn't want to stop helping the helpless after one year?

**MF:** Let me answer your question with a question: do you need a cape and superpowers to help the helpless?

**'Nuff Said!**

# QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS!

IF YOU COULD DATE A MARVEL CHARACTER, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?



**The Wasp.** At least that way, the stingers would be out where you could see them and could duck.

- J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI - Writer  
(Thor, The Twelve, Amazing Spider-Man)



**Wow... talk about a creepy question! I mean, you do realize that these are just fictional characters and -- Oh, heck, who am I kidding? Kitty Pryde. Definitely Kitty Pryde!**

- MARC SUMERAK - Writer  
(Franklin Richards)



**I don't really have an answer for this (maybe Jessica Drew-- she's freaky), but I'm dying to know if Bendis said "Luke Cage" or not. Because if he didn't, he's LYING.**

- BRIAN REED - Writer  
(Captain Marvel, Ms. Marvel, New Avengers: Illuminati)



**Luke Cage!**

**Wait, is this for publication?? I mean Kitty Pryde! Because I like me a nice Jewish girl!**

- BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS - (Jewish) Writer  
(New & Mighty Avengers, Ultimate Spider-Man)



**Anyone BUT Psylocke. A mind reader who can go all ninja on you?**

**That's just asking for trouble...**

- DAN SLOTT - Writer  
(Avengers: The Initiative, Amazing Spider-Man)



**Everyone who knows me would assume Psylocke, but I'd prefer to date Mary Jane. Sorry, Spidey.**

- C.B. CEBULSKI - Writer  
(Loners, Marvel Fairy Tales)



**Squirrel Girl. 'Nuff Said!**

JOE QUESADA -  
Marvel Editor-in-Chief, Artist  
(Amazing Spider-Man)



**Wasp, because she's rich and emotionally damaged.**

- FRANK CHO - Artist, Writer  
(Mighty Avengers)



**Any one that's been drawn by Frank Cho!**

- CHRIS YOST - Writer  
(New X-Men, X-Force)



**Dead Girl. That way, the date could continue if we got hit by a truck on the way to the restaurant.**

- FRED VAN LENTE - Writer  
(Super-Villain Team-Up, Incredible Hulk)



**Galactus. I bet he has funny stories.**

- MATT FRACTION - Writer  
(The Order, Punisher War Journal, The Immortal Iron Fist)



**Clea -- sorry, Dr. Strange! We'd be going out on dates in wacky dimensions with floating fangs and eyes and clocks...**

- JEFF PARKER - Writer  
(X-Men: First Class)



**Mystique... Because then I could "date" anyone I wanted. :)**

CRAIG KYLE - Writer  
(New X-Men)



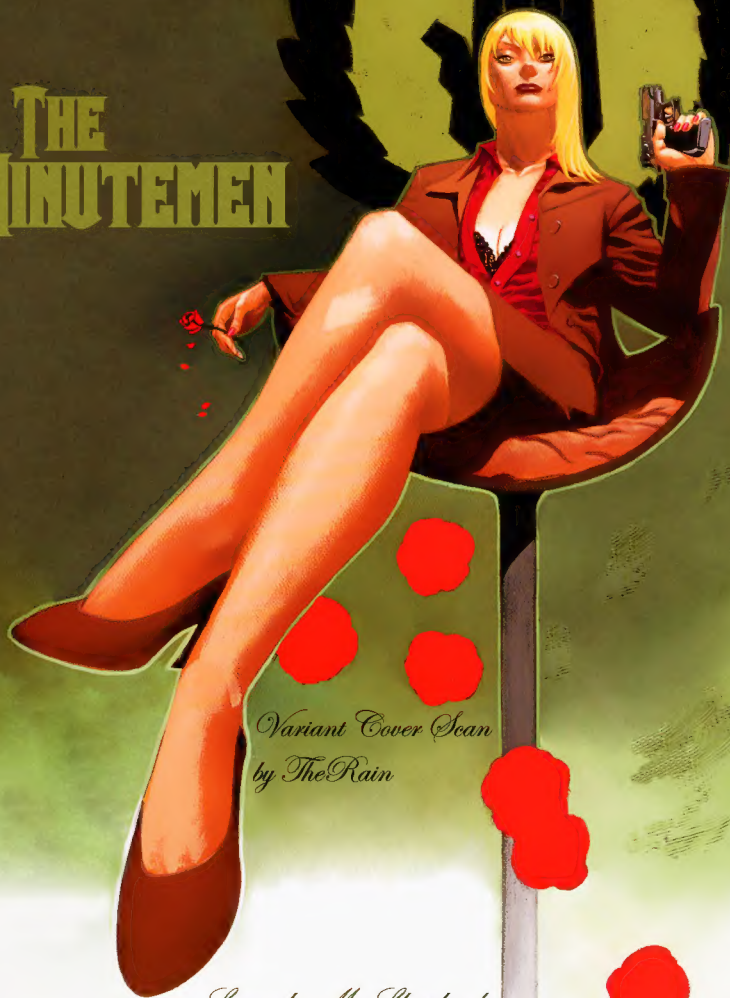
**Gambit. I know he's dirty hot, which is usually not what I go for (my boyfriend looks JUST like Peter Parker from Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane), but I've loved him since I was teeny-tiny and watching the old X-Men cartoons. And the best part would be that he could actually touch ME! >:)**

CHRISTINA STRAIN - Colorist  
(World War Hulk, Runaways)

**NOW YOU KNOW!**

# MCGAN

## THE MINUTEMEN



*Variant Cover Scan  
by TheRain*

*Scans by Mr. Shepherd*